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SUBJECT: NIGERIA'S PREPARATIONS FOR ROUND 2 OF THE  
CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY

REF: STATE 259661

1. This is an update of biosafety developments that have occurred in Nigeria since February 2004. According to Nigerian press reporting, biotechnologists, journalists, and other stakeholders met twice for a "brainstorming and public outing [discussion]" of Nigeria's National Biosafety Frameworks program in Nigeria in 2004. These meetings took place in Ibadan in April and in Zaria in December.

2. The institution responsible for biosafety in Nigeria is the National Biosafety Committee (NBC), a technical advisory body to the Ministry of Agriculture. The NBC is responsible for formulating policies and procedures pertaining to Nigerian agro-biotechnology. This committee comprises representatives from the ministries of agriculture, industry, environment, health, and science and technology, as well as representatives from Nigeria's private sector and scientific community.

3. Embassy Abuja ESTH Officer spoke on December 28 with Mathew Dore, the national project coordinator of the Nigerian National Biosafety Frameworks program, which comes under the NBC. Dore said Nigeria does not have biosafety legislation, but a draft law is circulating within the relevant ministries and agencies. This proposed legislation would establish biosafety controls on the transboundary movement of living modified organisms (LMOs) and regulate controlled trials, field trials, and commercial sales of LMOs in Nigeria. According to Dore, the proposed legislation would also address the issue of documentation accompanying LMOs, as well as the issues of the Biosafety Clearing House, liability, and redress.

4. Dore said Nigeria plans to hold two public hearings on biosafety for stakeholders and industry representatives by March 2005. He expects the relevant legislation to reach the National Assembly by June 2005.

5. According to Professor C.P.E. Omaliko, director general of Nigeria's National Biotechnology Development Agency, the country's National Agency for Food and Drug Administration Control has not developed regulations on labeling genetically modified foods, organisms, or drugs, and is not considering developing such legislation.

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